

REACH YOUR GOALS THROUGH THE POWER OF THE TRIBE



It is estimated that only 3% of the world's population regularly set goals for their personal development or wellbeing. Of that 3%, many people struggle to stay motivated over time and fail to reach the goals that would make a real difference to the quality of their lives. It is easy to respond by blaming ourselves – we are weak, we have no willpower, we overestimated our own abilities.

Luckily there is now a huge amount of science behind how to stay motivated and achieve the goals that we set for ourselves.

Behavioural Psychologist Dr Sean Young in his book 'Stick with It – The Science of Lasting Behaviour', explains that one of the most fundamental keys to success is the power of a supportive community to help us not only stick to our goals, but achieve things we never thought possible. The power of the group can motivate us, inspire us and even help us tolerate pain and suffering. But how does this work?

Humans are inherently social creatures and being part of a high functioning group has been central to the evolution of our species. In our evolutionary history, we simply would not have survived on our own. We needed to work as a group for protection, shelter and to hunt and gather. Isolation or expulsion from the group would have been a life-threatening event. In fact, experiments have shown that feeling left out or rejected activates areas of our brain associated with physical pain.

What difference does being part of a high performing group make in helping us achieve our goals?

An experiment carried out by Cohen et al (2010) gives us fascinating insights into the power of the group. Twelve male athletes from two of the elite Oxford University Rowing Teams completed a series of trials over a two-week period. The experiment was designed to measure the amount of endorphins produced by individual and group training activities. Endorphins are opioids which are the body's natural pain killers, often associated with an exercised induced high.



The athletes carried out sessions rowing individually on a rowing machine and rowing as part of a synchronised group. The results showed a massive increased 50% ability for the athletes to tolerate pain when rowing as a part of a group.

I have experienced this affect first-hand through my running training. In addition to the endorphine release, the impact of serotonin – the happiness chemical and oxytocin – the bonding chemical, can make what would be a gruelling training session on my own, a brilliant experience with my group – one that I want to repeat over and over.



The power of the group does not end there. Synchronised activity, including singing and walking, has been shown to enhance cooperativeness, generosity and a greater willingness to behave altruistically towards others in the group. In addition, the activity generated endorphin release is thought to play a very important part in social bonding.

How to Use the Power of the Group to Reach Goals

- Join a group of like minded people who are trying to achieve similar goals
- Tell your friends and family what you are trying to achieve and benefit from their understanding and moral support
- Find an accountability partner who will keep you motivated and accountable when you feel like giving up
- Spend time with other high achievers who will motivate and inspire you.

Whatever goals you have set for yourself, surround yourself with the power of a supportive tribe and you will be amazed what you can achieve!



Catherine McIntosh is the founder of STRIVE & THRIVE CONSULTING. She is a Consultant, Trainer and Writer on Performance and Resilience for Teams. Strive & Thrive provide a range of programmes ***Building Peak Performance and Resilience for Teams***.

The Thrive Wellbeing Workshop is specifically designed to be delivered to individuals & teams, teaching easy ways to make lasting changes to health and wellbeing.

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